






INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PEOPLE

SPECIAL DAYS

PREPARATION

- + Invite a guest speaker to talk about ministry with older people, eg your corps/church leader, Older People's Ministries leader or a local care home manager
- + Make contact with a local care home or older people's group and find out what help they need
- + Find out more information about [Older People's Ministry](#) within The Salvation Army to share with the group
- + Provide a copy of the poem for each member 'I'll go in the strength of the Lord' by Major Margaret Huyton. You may wish to ask a member or two to prepare a reading.
- + Prepare to play the song '[Ordinary People](#)' by Danniebelle Hall

-  *Invite a guest speaker to join your group virtually.*
-  *Email the poem to members in advance.*
-  *Share screen the song.*

Additional Resource:

- ❖ 'I'll go in the strength of the Lord' poem

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The United Nations commemorates International Day of Older People on 1 October. As the world has a growing ageing population, part of the purpose of the day is to recognise the 'essential contribution the majority of older [people] can continue to make to the functioning of society' ([UNFPA Asiapacific](#)).

The UN's Secretary-General's motto is 'leaving no one behind'. As members of God's Kingdom, how can we ensure no one feels left behind, and that regardless of age we recognise we all have our part to play?


What that 'part' is and what it looks like may have changed over the years, but our part of the puzzle remains as important and as vital as it has always been.



ACTIVITIES

TALK

Invite your guest to speak to the members about how they could help, volunteer or launch a fundraising project. You could also ask them to share some of their challenges which members can pray for.

 *Invite the guest speaker to join your group virtually.*

DISCUSS

Recognising that we are all different and different things take us out of our comfort zones, what of the following would you, wouldn't you, could you, couldn't you do?

1. Climb Mount Everest?
2. Agree to phone someone who is housebound every week for a chat?
3. Drive at speed round a Formula One circuit?
4. Take part in a run - 5K? 10K? a marathon? (You could fundraise!)
5. Pray for every fellow member, every week?
6. Be a friend to a local care home, making friends with residents who don't often receive visitors?
7. Learn to fly a plane?
8. Send a letter or card of encouragement to a different neighbour each week?
9. Complete the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage (around 500 miles in northern Spain)?
10. Speak to your corps officer or club leader about how you can help them in their ministry?

POEM

Share the poem 'I'll go in the strength of the Lord' by Major Margaret Huyton. You may wish to have a member or two do a reading, read and discuss as a group, or give for members to read and reflect individually. Find out if any particular lines or themes resonate with any of your members.

 *Email the poem to members in advance.*



BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

John 6:1-12 Feeding the five thousand

Alternatively adapt and use 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 The body of Christ

The feeding of the five thousand is a well-known story about God's provision, but have you ever put yourself in the sandals of the young boy who had the fish and loaves? Can you remember a time, when you were young, when you were in the middle of an extremely large crowd? How did it feel? I suspect that whatever the situation, you didn't feel responsible for the needs of those around you, especially the adults.

Did the boy in the story hear those around him grumbling that they were hungry? When the boy offered his lunch to the disciples, I wonder if he felt overwhelmed by the number of people around him and their very human needs?

It is very easy for us to feel overwhelmed when we watch the news on TV and read the newspapers. The needs our own country, let alone the whole world, particularly after the last eighteen months, can seem insurmountable and unending. We can feel insignificant, perhaps even worthless in the light of this need. We may feel that we have little to give, to offer - we can't do what we once did and there are stronger, more important people whom God will surely want to use before us.

But a little goes a long way in the hands of Jesus. Or as the singer Danniebelle Hall says in her song 'Ordinary People', 'little becomes much when you place it in their hands.' Five small loaves and two fishes became worth half a year's wages and fed five thousand men and possibly many women and children too - an impact the boy couldn't have possibly imagined.

But the need was only met because the boy was willing to give what he had, even if he couldn't have imagined what difference it was going to make. He may have wondered if he was going to go hungry himself by giving up his lunch, but in the giving he received more than he could eat.

Verse 6 of the poem we shared gives us one last treasure. It tells us Jesus knew what he was going to do before he even asked. He knew that among that huge crowd the boy was there and had what was needed.

Jesus knows you are there, and he can use what you have to make a difference. It may be we feel we don't have enough time to give or we don't have the energy and resources we once had, but in God's hands the little we do have will be made beautiful and will do the

Connect



extraordinary. What we can do changes over the years and may look very different, but we all have our part to play.

The poem 'I'll go in the strength of the Lord' by Major Margaret Huyton imagines this very conversation with our loving Father. There is always something we can do - God always has a purpose for us - we just have to be ready and willing.

REFLECTION

Play the song '[Ordinary People](#)' by Danniebelle Hall and finish on a time of reflection.

 *Share screen the song.*

SONGS

- ♪ SASB 598 'Just as I am, thine own to be'
- ♪ SASB 623 '[Take my life and let it be](#)'
- ♪ SASB 944 '[Just where he needs me](#)'

WEBSITE AND CONTACT DETAILS

- Connect Website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/connect
- Family Ministries Website: www.salvationarmy.org.uk/families
- Email: familyministries@salvationarmy.org.uk
- Facebook: @sarmyfm
- Twitter: @ukifamily
- Instagram: safamily_ministries



Family Ministries

Having faith in the family

Providing intergenerational support, training and resources for

Children | Adults | Everyone



Family
Ministries
Having faith in the family



I'll go in the strength of the Lord

A conversation with God

'I'll go in the strength of the Lord' - it's not the going that concerns me,
But the staying. It's hard; frustrating; lonely.
I once was so active, alive, so busy and happy in my work,
Full of plans and hopes for the future,
Dreams with energy and time combined to harness for your Kingdom.
Those days have gone. I am tired and my body wearies so easily.
Oh, I still have the vision, mine eyes still see thy glory,
And I hope for a glorious future;
But I must relinquish the fight to other hands.
These days I feel so useless. My work is done, my hour is past;
Away from this strident world, another time, another place.

'My child, you are precious in my sight.
Yes, you have worked hard and faithfully, but your work is not yet done.
You cannot teach? You have the wisdom of experience
To counsel those in your place. Remember your dark days?
There are many now who would flee
Were it not for such as you to love them through the darkness.
You cannot preach? Then pray - for yourself
And for those who are too busy to pray.
They would fail were it not for your heart's petition.
You cannot go out? Then speak to those who come in;
Make your home a temple for me
So that all who come may feel me near.
You cannot work? Then just love.
There is little love in these noisy, frightened days.
Yet I died that love be poured out over this world.
Use the precious measure given to you,
And spread it to enlighten those in darkness around you.
No, my child; you are not wasted in this world. Wait patiently,
Soon enough will come my call. You will hear my voice ...
Well done, my good and faithful servant. Well done.'

Major Margaret Huyton